

City Council of the Mayor and Council of New Castle
Special City Council Meeting at the Public Safety Building/Police Station
1 Municipal Boulevard – New Castle
Tuesday – October 25, 2011 – 6 p.m.

Present:

Council President William Barthel
Councilperson John Cochran
Councilperson John Gaworski
Councilperson Ted Megginson
Councilperson Teel Petty

Also Present: City Administrator Cathryn Thomas, Finance/HR Director Marian Delaney

Agenda

6 p.m.: Review of the updated City Web site

City Administrator Thomas introduced Greg Hughes and Christine Karpovage of the Delaware Government Information Center (GIC), with whom City personnel have been working to develop an updated Web site for the City. Ms. Thomas said that the GIC staff has been great to work with and that City staff had received training and have been working on adding to the updated site prior to it going live in the near future. The new site has a greatly improved look, is easier to navigate and is very user-friendly.

Mr. Hughes thanked the City Council for giving the GIC the opportunity to update the City site. He said that City staff had worked well along with the GIC to get the site to the point where it is at this time.

Ms. Karpovage reviewed with the Council members the new site and pointed out many of the components and how the navigation works. She noted that one of the many useful features is that there are a number of different ways to access the same information on the site. She also suggested that information could be added to the site in a variety of ways. For example, she suggested that when posting minutes to the site, this could be done by inserting the full text of the minutes directly onto the site, and in conjunction with that, a PDF file of the minutes could be posted as a link in the same location.

The Council members had a number of comments and questions:

How many City employees will be involved in keeping the site updated? It was noted that five employees thus far have received training. The plan is to have the City Administrator and Finance/HR Director be designated as "administrators" for the site, able to upload and update directly. Other employees will be designated as contributors, who may perform updates, however those posts must be reviewed by an administrator prior to being uploaded live on the site.

With a large amount of information on the site initially and more constantly being added over time, what is the limit of how much can go on the site? The GIC said there really is no limit to what can go on the site. The State system which hosts the new City site has ample storage space now and projected for the

future so that the amount of information to be stored and available to access on the City Web site should not present itself as an issue.

It was suggested that in the Mayor & Council section, each elected official may want to provide biographical and other information accessed through a link near their pictures, names and contact information. Further, for any Council members who wanted to write what has been known as the, "Council Corner", that can also be added to that section of the site.

Would City election information be added to the site? Yes, when the next City election draws near, a wealth of information important for voters would be added to the site. The one prohibition would be that nothing of a "political" nature could appear on the City Web site.

It was suggested that on the "Visitor Information" section of the site, some survey data could be collected. For persons who may be visiting in the near future, they could inform the City of that and ask for any information they may require. Then, for persons who had recently visited, the City could ask about the visitors' experiences.

Would data about the site usage be collected and available to the City? Yes, the GIC has a system to track numbers of hits on the various components of the site and would provide that information to the City.

Mr. Hughes said that in the future the City may want to consider how to integrate social media with promoting the City and its Web site, that is, using sites like Facebook and Twitter. This could greatly increase the number of persons who would potentially receive information disseminated by the City.

The consensus of the City Council members was that they were pleased with the updated site and grateful to the GIC and City staff members for all the work they had done in redesigning the City Web site.

It was noted that the City will have a new Web site address, changing from the current .org domain to the .gov domain. The GIC will ensure that all persons looking for the City Web site will be directed or redirected to the new site with the .gov domain name. It was advised, however, that since the City already owned "newcastlecity" .com, .org and .net, that the City continuously maintain ownership of those domain names.

A discussion was held about timing for launching of the updated site, and how it will be publicized through the traditional media such as the local weekly newspaper and also the regional daily newspaper. The launch date was set for Monday, November 7, with press releases being provided to the media at appropriate times in advance.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathryn C. Thomas, New Castle City Administrator